

Weighing & Measuring: Getting What You Paid For

consumer**brief**

Almost everything we buy is sold by weight, volume, length, count or measure. For example a dozen eggs, a liter of soda, a yard of cloth, a gallon of milk, a pound of hamburger, a cord of firewood. Since we don't carry a scale or measuring tape with us, how can we be sure a pound is a pound and an inch is an inch?

In 1911 Governor Woodrow Wilson established the Office of Weights and Measures to protect the citizens of New Jersey. Part of the Division of Consumer Affairs, under the Department of Law and Public Safety, Weights and Measures' officials work to keep the marketplace honest by using highly accurate equipment to inspect scales, meters, scanning equipment, gasoline station pumps and lumberyards throughout the state. Weighing or measuring devices are not permitted to be used for commercial purposes unless they are registered with the Office of Weights and Measures.

Because of the inspections and investigations conducted by the men and women of Weights and Measures, New Jersey consumers can have confidence when shopping.

However, consumers should also pay attention when making purchases. Small, seemingly insignificant errors can add up.

SCALES AND SCANNERS

- Always check for the Weights and Measures seal, indicating a scale has been tested. Each registered business also receives a Registration Certificate which should be prominently displayed.
- Check to make sure scales are set at zero prior to weighing produce. If the weight display on a scale indicates a weight when there is nothing on the scale, bring this to the vendor's attention. Any weight indicated on the scale prior to weighing of your item will result in additional cost to you.

- Be cautious of scales which appear to be in poor condition. Scales with broken glass or those which are not level are more likely to be in error.
- Make sure the shelf price or advertised price agrees with the scanner price on your receipt.

HOME HEATING OIL

- Request a specific delivery date and plan to be home at that time.
- Make sure the meter register reads all zeros before delivery begins.
- When the delivery is completed, compare the delivered gallons printed on the ticket with the gallons indicated on the meter register.

GAS PUMPS

- Check for the seal indicating that the dispensers have been tested by Weights & Measures.
- Make sure the price on the sign is the same as the price on the pump.
- Make sure attendants have reset the pump to zero before filling your tank.
- Check to make sure your receipt matches what the pump registers prior to signing your credit card form.

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PROPANE

- When having your propane cylinder (the type used for barbecuing) filled by weight, make sure the weight of the cylinder and any remaining propane is not part of the total weight for which you are paying.

TIMING DEVICES

The Office of Weights and Measures annually registers approximately 32,000 timing devices such as those used in laundry drying machines, money operated air pumps, car vacuum machines, etc.

- Check for the blue Weights and Measures seals, indicating that the devices have been inspected and tested.

If you have a problem with a weighing and measuring device try to resolve it with the manager or owner. If they can't resolve your problem to your satisfaction, contact the New Jersey Office of Weights and Measures at: 1261 Route 1 & 9 South, Avenel, New Jersey, or call 908-815-4840.

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